

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Original): A mixed liquid droplet forming method comprising:

a first step in which a voltage is applied first between a raw material liquid housed in one of a plurality of nozzles and a flat electrode disposed opposite the nozzle to discharge the raw material liquid from the front end of the nozzle and form a droplet made of the raw material liquid on a droplet forming object disposed between the front end of the nozzle and the flat electrode; and

a second step in which a voltage is applied between a raw material liquid housed in the other nozzle of the plurality of nozzles and the flat electrode to discharge the raw material liquid from the front end of the nozzle, and the droplet is mixed with the raw material liquid to form a droplet of the mixed liquid.

Claim 2 (Original): The mixed liquid droplet forming method according to Claim 1,

wherein in the first step, an electrode is provided on the outer circumference of at least one nozzle of the plurality of nozzles and the electrode is supplied with a potential equal to or higher than the potential of a raw material liquid inside the nozzle.

Claim 3 (Original): A mixed liquid droplet forming apparatus, comprising:

a plurality of nozzles that house a plurality of raw material liquids and discharge the plurality of raw material liquids independently from each other;

a flat electrode disposed opposite the front ends of the plurality of nozzles; and
a voltage applying unit that applies a voltage between raw material liquids housed in the plurality of nozzles and the flat electrode.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The mixed liquid droplet forming apparatus according to Claim 3, further comprising a control unit that controls the voltage applying ~~apparatus~~ unit so that a voltage is applied to an arbitrary raw material liquid among the plurality of raw material liquids.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): ~~The mixed liquid droplet forming apparatus according to Claim 4~~ A mixed liquid droplet forming apparatus, comprising:

a plurality of nozzles that house a plurality of raw material liquids and discharge the plurality of raw material liquids independently from each other;

a flat electrode disposed opposite the front ends of the plurality of nozzles;

a voltage applying unit that applies a voltage between raw material liquids housed in the plurality of nozzles and the flat electrode; and

a control unit that controls the voltage applying unit so that a voltage is applied to an arbitrary raw material liquid among the plurality of raw material liquids,

wherein an electrode is provided on the outer circumference of at least one nozzle of the plurality of nozzles, and the control unit controls the voltage applying unit so that the electrode is supplied with a potential equal to or higher than the potential of the raw material liquid.

Claim 6 (Original): An ink jet printing method for printing a color image on a printing object by using a plurality of inks, comprising:

a first step in which a plurality of ink nozzles which house the plurality of inks and a dilution nozzle which houses a dilute solution that can dilute the inks are used, and the ink or the dilute solution is discharged from the ink nozzle or the dilution nozzle by an electrostatic sucking force to form a droplet on the printing object; and

a second step in which the ink or the dilute solution is discharged from the ink nozzle or the dilution nozzle by an electrostatic sucking force, and the inks or the dilute solution are mixed in the droplet to form a droplet in an additive color.

Claim 7 (Original): The ink jet printing method according to Claim 6, wherein in the first step, a droplet made of the dilute solution is formed on a printing object by discharging the dilute solution from the dilution nozzle.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): ~~The ink jet printing method according to Claim 6, further comprising[[,]]~~ An ink jet printing method for printing a color image on a printing object by using a plurality of inks, comprising:

a first step in which a plurality of ink nozzles which house the plurality of inks and a dilution nozzle which houses a dilute solution that can dilute the inks are used, and the ink or the dilute solution is discharged from the ink nozzle or the dilution nozzle by an electrostatic sucking force to form a droplet on the printing object;

a second step in which the ink or the dilute solution is discharged from the ink nozzle or the dilution nozzle by an electrostatic sucking force, and the inks or the dilute solution are mixed in the droplet to form a droplet in an additive color, and

after the second step, a step in which the chroma of the droplet is measured, and based on the measured chroma, the quantity of discharging the ink or the dilute solution is controlled so that the chroma of the droplet becomes a desired chroma.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): ~~The ink jet printing method according to Claim 7~~[[,]] An ink jet printing method for printing a color image on a printing object by using a plurality of inks, comprising:

a first step in which a plurality of ink nozzles which house the plurality of inks and a dilution nozzle which houses a dilute solution that can dilute the inks are used, and the ink or the dilute solution is discharged from the ink nozzle or the dilution nozzle by an electrostatic sucking force to form a droplet on the printing object; and

a second step in which the ink or the dilute solution is discharged from the ink nozzle or the dilution nozzle by an electrostatic sucking force, and the inks or the dilute solution are mixed in the droplet to form a droplet in an additive color,

wherein in the first step, a droplet made of the dilute solution is formed on a printing object by discharging the dilute solution from the dilution nozzle, and

wherein in the first step, an electrode is provided on the outer circumference of the dilution nozzle and the electrode is supplied with a potential equal to or higher than the potential of the dilute solution inside the dilution nozzle.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): An ink jet printing apparatus for printing a color image on a printing object by using a plurality of inks, comprising:

- a plurality of ink nozzles which house the plurality of inks, respectively;
- a dilution nozzle which houses a dilute solution that can dilute the inks;
- a flat electrode disposed opposite the front ends of the ink nozzles and the dilution nozzle; and
- a voltage applying unit which applies a voltage between the inks and the dilute solution and the flat electrode, wherein
- the plurality of ink nozzles and the dilution nozzle are disposed apart from each other.

Claim 11 (Original): The ink jet printing apparatus according to Claim 10, further comprising a control unit which controls the voltage applying unit so that a voltage is applied to an arbitrary liquid among the inks and the dilute solution.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): ~~The ink jet printing apparatus according to Claim 11[[.]]~~
An ink jet printing apparatus for printing a color image on a printing object by using a plurality of inks, comprising:

- a plurality of ink nozzles which house the plurality of inks, respectively;
- a dilution nozzle which houses a dilute solution that can dilute the inks;
- a flat electrode disposed opposite the front ends of the ink nozzles and the dilution nozzle;

a voltage applying unit which applies a voltage between the inks and the dilute solution and the flat electrode, wherein the plurality of ink nozzles and the dilution nozzle are disposed apart from each other; and

a control unit which controls the voltage applying unit so that a voltage is applied to an arbitrary liquid among the inks and the dilute solution,

wherein an electrode is provided on the outer circumference of the dilution nozzle, and the control unit controls the voltage applying unit so that the electrode is supplied with a potential equal to or higher than the potential of the dilute solution.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): ~~The ink jet printing apparatus according to Claim 11,~~
~~further comprising:~~ An ink jet printing apparatus for printing a color image on a printing object by using a plurality of inks, comprising:

a plurality of ink nozzles which house the plurality of inks, respectively;

a dilution nozzle which houses a dilute solution that can dilute the inks;

a flat electrode disposed opposite the front ends of the ink nozzles and the dilution nozzle; and

a voltage applying unit which applies a voltage between the inks and the dilute solution and the flat electrode, wherein the plurality of ink nozzles and the dilution nozzle are disposed apart from each other;

a control unit which controls the voltage applying unit so that a voltage is applied to an arbitrary liquid among the inks and the dilute solution,

an illuminating light source which illuminates a droplet formed on the printing object;
and

a chroma measuring unit which measures the chroma of the droplet illuminated by the illuminating light source, wherein

the control unit controls the voltage applying unit based on the chroma of the droplet measured by the chroma measuring unit so that the chroma of the droplet becomes a desired chroma and adjusts the quantity of discharging the ink or the dilute solution.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): An ink jet printing electrode-attached nozzle which is used in an ink jet printing apparatus including a flat electrode and disposed opposite the flat electrode, comprising an ink nozzle housing only an ink and an electrode provided on the outer circumference of the nozzle,

wherein a voltage is applied between the ink in said ink nozzle and said flat electrode to form a droplet.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): An ink jet printing electrode-attached nozzle which is used in an ink jet printing apparatus including a flat electrode and disposed opposite the flat electrode, comprising a dilution nozzle that houses only a dilute solution and an electrode that is provided on the outer circumference of the dilution nozzle,

wherein a voltage is applied between the dilute solution in said dilution nozzle and said flat electrode to form a droplet.

Claim 16 (Currently Amended): A nozzle which houses a single raw material liquid, said nozzle opposing a flat electrode,

wherein an electrode is provided on the outer circumference of the front end of the nozzle,

wherein a voltage is applied between the single raw material liquid in said nozzle and a flat electrode to form a droplet.

Claim 17 (New): A nozzle according to Claim 16, wherein said nozzle is made of glass.